



## General Assembly

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Item 44 of the provisional agenda\*

**Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations**

**Letter dated 26 August 2005 from the Permanent Representative  
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed  
to the Secretary-General**

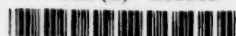
I have the honour to transmit herewith the national report of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 44 of the provisional agenda.

*(Signed)* M. Javad Zarif

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\* A/60/150.



**Annex to the letter dated 26 August 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations**

**1. Dialogue among Civilizations, as a new emerging paradigm in international relation**

On 21 September 1998, at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, called for institutionalizing dialogue and "replacing hostility and confrontation with discourse and understanding." In particular, President Khatami invited the international community to broaden dialogue among civilizations to influence the maintenance of peace and security and the preservation of environment. As a first step, President Khatami proposed that "the United Nations designate the year 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, in the earnest hope that through such a dialogue the realization of universal justice and liberty may be initiated." The thrust of this initiative was an appeal to human understanding that genuine dialogue on a global scale, involving all stakeholders, offers the only practical way to ensure meaningful and effective international cooperation.

In response, the General Assembly, in its resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, decided to proclaim 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and called on governments and the United Nations to plan and implement cultural, educational and social programs to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through conferences and seminars and disseminating information.

On the eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit, a number of the Heads of State and Government assembled in a Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations, on September 5, 2000, a day before the opening of the Millennium Summit, to share their views, experience and vision for a world at peace, buoyed by dialogue, tolerance, mutual understanding and commitment. This event was aptly described by the Secretary General, as the best moral and spiritual foundation for the Summit. Subsequently, the Heads of State and Government adopted the Millennium Declaration, in which they considered, "tolerance" as one of the fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and in this context, they emphasized that "*dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted*".

In celebration and support of the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, a number of major international events and activities were launched and therefore interactive discussions on this ideal prevailed around the world. Drawing on these efforts, the General Assembly adopted the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilization in November 2001, in order to promote and develop this new emerging paradigm in various fields of international relations including peace, security, human rights and development.

As a matter of fact, the idea of Dialogue among Civilizations, throughout recent years, has engendered wide interest at the level of international organization, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and international institutions with a view to exploring practical ways for better cooperation in international relations. Great interest has also been expressed by Governments and leading public figures around the world for a renewed effort at all levels of society to encourage a dialogue among civilizations. These numerous events were held across the globe with a view to exploring enhancing the implementation mechanisms and to following up on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action. In this context, the conferences and activities looked at means of facilitating dialogue and suggested that, in addition to face-to-face encounters, traditional and new media along with multicultural education could be vital in promoting dialogue.

In this regard, UNESCO has played a pivotal role in the observance of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and it has been particularly instrumental in fostering this interest by holding conferences and seminars together with Governments, civil society and other United Nations organizations in many countries. Dialogue among civilizations has also been selected as a strategic objective by UNESCO for its medium-term strategy covering the period 2002-2007, a reflection of the organization's commitment to this process.

By the same token, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has been engaged in this process, from the outset, to promote and strengthen the culture of dialogue among civilizations. In deed, the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations was already negotiated between OIC Member States and adopted by the Twenty-seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in June 2000, before submitting it to the United Nations General Assembly, to be adopted and endorsed by all UN Member States. The OIC has also played an active role for the implementation of this Global Agenda to further promote the ideal of dialogue among civilizations. In this regard, the 31<sup>st</sup> ICFM (June 2004) adopted a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations. Furthermore, the Third Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among the OIC Member States, of March 2005 adopted "the Principles and Guidelines for the Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among OIC Member States". This document was adopted by the ICFM, held in Yemen in the end of June 2005.

Like the preceding years, 2005 has also shown that the idea of dialogue among civilizations is a must for the international community to tackle the growing threats against peace and security. During the first 6 months of this year, a number of international conferences were held around the globe to further strengthen and promote this concept in various fields:

- On 5 April 2005, the International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples convened at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. At this meeting, President Khatami urged open dialogue among civilizations as a necessary condition to improve international relations and development and called for the establishment of a Global Forum for the Promotion of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures.
- An international Conference, entitled: "Dialogue among Civilizations: Islam and the West" was held from 6 to 8 May 2005, in Quebec, Canada under the auspices of UNESCO and Laval University with the participation of the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. This was the Fourth International GEPANC Conference (Political Studies on Contemporary North Africa) held at Laval University in Quebec City, on the topic of dialogue between civilisations and especially on the relationship between Islam and the West.
- The International Conference on "Environment, Peace, and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures" was held in Tehran, Iran from 9-10 May 2005, during which Tehran Declaration was adopted.
- The International Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Action was held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco from 14-16 June 2005, so as to make the dialogue among cultures and civilizations a reality of our daily life and to build on the already numerous declarations, reports and initiatives for the Dialogue among civilizations and cultures, with a view to strengthening these initiatives, making them sustainable and translating them into concrete and specific measures that can realistically be implemented within a given time-line.

- More recently, the Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace was organized under a tripartite partnership among governments, United Nations System and civil society representing religious non-governmental organizations was held on 22 June 2005 in the United Nations in preparation for the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2005. The Conference, chaired by Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Philippines, calls upon that the Member States of the United Nations undertake, among others, practical actions such as those proposed in the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations. The Conference also invited the Secretary General to explore enhancing the implementation mechanisms and to follow up on the, inter alia, the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action of November 2001.

## **2. Future prospect for Dialogue among Civilizations; influencing the maintenance of international peace and security**

While we may be hardly in the habit of associating dialogue among civilizations with peace and security, it is nonetheless profoundly essential. The dialogue of civilizations, in deed, calls for strong political will at the highest level to keep peace among different civilizations and in all regions and areas of the world. In this respect, the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations emphasizes that this paradigm provides important contributions to maintaining peace and security.

Furthermore and in reaction to the prospect for future dialogue, the Secretary-General of the United Nations truly emphasized that:

*"The prospects are positive if we fully understand that cultural and religious diversity is a source of strength, not a cause for division and confrontation. .... Dialogue is possible if we accept that we live in a diverse world but share the same values of tolerance and freedom, ... The results of our interaction will be successful if we engage in respectful dialogue, where we do not pass judgment on other cultural norms before examining our own. Most importantly, Governments have to exercise the necessary political will to ensure an ongoing dialogue among various groups in society that it is carried out at all levels, from local and national to regional and international, involving all, bearing in mind that the United Nations remains the natural home of dialogue among civilizations; the forum where such dialogue can flourish and bear fruit in every field of human endeavour. Without this dialogue taking place every day among all nations — within and between civilizations, cultures and groups — no peace can be lasting and no prosperity can be secure. [Emphasis added]"<sup>1</sup>*

In deed, the idea of Dialogue among civilizations is essential if we are to be successful in achieving one of the main goals of the United Nations, i.e., to prevent conflicts, maintain international peace and security and further cooperation among Member States. By creating understanding and mutual respect, we can reduce misunderstanding and mistrust and put in place the basis for peaceful resolution of conflicts. Needless to reiterate that Dialogue is also important for other goals of the UN, including promoting the preservation of development. By sharing experiences and jointly seeking solutions, we can solve current and future economic and social problems that affect us all.

<sup>1</sup> Secretary General Report: A/56/523

This is why the current international environment is in dire need of promotion of the idea of dialogue, founded on inclusion and participation and mutual respect among civilizations. The paradigm of "dialogue among civilizations" is one of the most efficient means to tackle the growing threat of clash and to maintain international peace and security. This paradigm of universal vision would serve as a breeding ground for the lofty objectives of "larger freedom, development, security and human rights for all" and therefore must be the prevailing discourse of the new century, if we want to leave our future generations with a more secure and prosperous world than the one we have inherited.

In a world of interconnected threats and challenges, it is in the interest of international community to promote dialogue among civilizations so as to make progress in such areas as threats to international peace and security. We must take advantage of this paradigm, at this defining moment in history, with a view to reducing the prevalence of formidable threats, including violent conflicts and terrorism. To that end, strengthening the culture of dialogue among civilization which facilitates mutual understanding, is one of the most important elements in combating terrorism, for the fact is that, terrorism tries to make the diversity between nations the source of conflict, while the dialogue can help make that same diversity the foundation for cooperation and betterment.

Along this line, the General Assembly, adopted a resolution on December 2, 2004, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism" in which it emphasized that:

*"[T]olerance and the enhancement of dialogue among civilizations are among the most important elements in promoting cooperation and success in combating terrorism,"<sup>2</sup>*

Besides, the Secretary General is of the opinion that:

*"Terrorism represents the worst of humanity, whereas the dialogue seeks to enable and promote the best in humanity. A dialogue among civilizations is not only a necessary answer to terrorism — it is in many ways its nemesis. Where terrorism seeks to divide humanity, the dialogue aims to unite us; where terrorism is based on an exclusionary, belligerent view of the world, the dialogue seeks to promote inclusion and acceptance of the notion that the possession of truth does not belong to any one group alone. Where terrorism seeks to make our diversity the source of conflict, the dialogue can help make that same diversity the foundation for betterment and growth<sup>3</sup>.*

Furthermore, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in a resolution entitled: "call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism"<sup>4</sup> reiterated that:

*"Recalling in particular that the year 2001 is being observed as United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, ... affirms that such dialogue constitutes a fundamental challenge based on the unity of humankind and commonly shared values, the recognition of its cultural diversity and the equal dignity of each civilization and each culture; ... Noting that intolerance, discrimination, inequality, ignorance, poverty and exclusion, among others, provide fertile ground for terrorism, [and] affirms that while acts of*

<sup>2</sup> A/RES/59/143

<sup>3</sup> Secretary General Report: A/56/523

<sup>4</sup> Resolution adopted at the 11th plenary meeting, on 20 October 2001, 31 C/resolution 39.

*terrorism can never be justified whatever the motives, the world community requires a global and inclusive vision of development based on the observance of human rights, mutual respect, intercultural dialogue and the alleviation of poverty, founded on justice, equity and solidarity, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations and segments of society;"*

In the light of the above facts, it seems that the time has come for the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations to affect the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular through mechanisms dedicated to eradicate terrorism. Thus, the international community should strictly abide by commitments emanating from this paradigm, if the guiding light of this community is the needs and hopes of peoples everywhere. This approach, at this critical juncture, is a must and exigency which necessitates forging a new consensus on how to confront, *inter alia*, the threat of terrorism in the light of the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations. In other words, this idea has to be strengthened so as to contribute to the eradication of terrorism, drawing on its character as an intellectual and ethical discourse.

### **3. Iran's Activities in the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations:**

In order to coordinate the activities of both governmental and non-governmental organizations for the promotion of the idea of dialogue among civilizations, the Islamic Republic of Iran founded the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations (ICDAC), as an organization whose primary mission is to promote the concept of a global structure based on mutual understanding and tolerance. During these years, the ICDAC has planned and implemented appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote this concept, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, with a view to the promotion of the idea of dialogue among civilizations. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran held numerous conferences and meetings in Iran and around the globe with participation and contribution of many countries and international organizations to promote this idea and find new means and ways for strengthening dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding between and within civilizations.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran has worked with the Department of the Public Information in the United Nations in strengthening the dialogue among civilizations. In this regard and according to the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 2004 annual session of the Committee on Information, a new section was inserted in the annual resolution, namely, "United Nations public information policies and activities". Based on this section, entitled "Role of the Department of the Public Information in strengthening the dialogue among civilizations", the General Assembly encourages the Department of Public Information to provide the necessary support for the dissemination of information pertaining to, *inter alia*, dialogue among civilizations and to take due steps in fostering the culture of dialogue among civilizations via all mass media, such as the Internet, print, radio and television.<sup>5</sup> This initiative led to launching a series of seminars, by the Department of Public Information on the United Nations, in 2004 and 2005 namely, "Unlearning Intolerance" and "Islamophobia". They were successful steps in engaging civil society leaders and a wider audience in ways to best meet the challenge of these kinds."

<sup>5</sup> The Secretary-General was requested to submit a report in this regard to the Committee on Information at each annual session.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has also actively participated in all respective efforts and activities made by such international organizations as UNESCO and Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC).

### **3.1. Activities of the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations (ICDAC)**

The International Centre for Dialogue Among Civilizations (ICDAC) was officially set up on 9 December 1998<sup>6</sup> after the proposal of proclaiming 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The ICDAC is primarily an organization dedicated to promote the concept of a global structure based on mutual understanding and tolerance. To achieve that goal, the Centre sets forth its goals as follows:

- To promote dialogue among civilizations and cultures on an international scale as a means of advancing the interpretation of the UN Charter and of improving human well-being.
- To promote and expand the culture of dialogue at the national level.
- To promote the culture of peace in order to foster peaceful coexistence and prevent human rights violations.
- To help establish and broaden the international civil society through cultural interaction among nations.
- To strengthen spiritual, moral and religious culture.
- To conduct research on the significance and possible interpretations of Dialogue Among Civilizations and to release the findings nationally and internationally

Furthermore, The ICDAC pays attention to diverse disciplines, and its activities have been organized to achieve preeminent goals in the fields of scientific research, information, and participation in and convening of domestic, regional, and international conferences and seminars.

Up to now, the ICDAC has pursued and performed numerous activities, which could be summarized as follows:

#### **Research projects**

- Compilation, writing, and translation of tens of books and more than 200 papers in the Human and Social Sciences, such as:
- The Role of Social Sciences in Dialogue among Civilizations,
- Playing with Modernity,
- Economic Obstacles to An International Dialogue
- An Investigation of the Theories and Strategies of Dialogue
- Iranian Thinkers And the Possibility of Dialogue with West
- Translation of two Encyclopedia:
- The Encyclopedia of Human History, Volume 5,
- The Encyclopedia of Dialogue among Civilizations

#### **Instructional Activities**

<sup>6</sup> The foundation of the ICDAC and its missions has been issued as United Nations Documents: A/54/291

The ICDAC has already organized a wide range of educational and scientific Programme for the public benefit, including offering course programme, holding workshops, lecture sessions, and seminars, in which a large number of both scholars and laymen participated. According to the statistics, about 18500 participants have benefited from the course Programme and lecture sessions, and also about 4750 people have taken part in the instructional workshops. Some of the courses are as follows:

- The Theoretical foundations of Liberalism
- Islamic World and the Human Civilization
- The Population Problems of the World Today
- Interactive Ideas in Islam and Christianity

#### **Publications:**

##### **a. Books**

Publishing numerous books in the field of world cultures and civilizations has been one of the successful activities of this center. The ICDAC has already published 205 books (including writings, translations, and bilingual series) in different subjects pertaining to dialogue among civilizations. Some of these books are as follows:

- -The Spirit of Protestantism,
- -Philosophy in the Ancient Christianity,
- -The Path of Buddha,
- -The Heart of Islam,
- -Legends from Africa,
- -German Lyrics,
- -Japan: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow
- -Singapore: From the 77iird World to the First World,
- -Marco Polo in Iran

##### **b. Periodicals:**

- Report on Dialogue (monthly periodical), 16 issues have already been published, each of them has specific subject, including Diversity of Cultures (No. 8), Art and Dialogue among Civilizations (No. 10), the Central Asia (No. 11), Mesopotamia (No. 14), Asia Minor (No. 15).
- Pol-e-Firoozeh (the Turquoise Bridge) Quarterly: 14 issues, including: Japan, India, Mythology, Theater, and Music, Poland
- Silsilat al Hawar periodical (in Arabic): 3 issues.

Furthermore, a wide variety of articles, lectures, and roundtable discussions (taken from different cultural events in the world pertaining to Dialogue among Civilizations) ,as an ongoing project of the Center, are being collected in the iCDAC, to be used as a source of information. Up to now, more than 3000 papers and lectures in Persian, English, French, German, Arabic, and Russian languages have been collected. Some of the Russian texts have been translated into Persian. A voluminous series of the articles is expected to be published (in about 20 volumes) in the near future. Some documentary films about Dialogue among Civilizations (including interviews with thinkers and artists) have also been made by or by order of the ICDAC.

### **Cooperation with International Organizations and Personalities**

The ICDAC has already had cooperation (in the form of intermittent seminar; and presentations) and communication with a considerable number of the international institutions, few examples are as follows:

- Schloss Neuhausen Foundation in Berlin-Germany
- University of Bonn- Germany
- The International Academy of Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations-Warsaw, Poland
- Casa Asia- Barcelona, Spain
- UNESCO
- UNICEF
- The Islamic Conference Organization
- -The Japan Foundation

It should be mentioned that supporting NGOs to hold festivals and cultural events has also been one of the continuous activities of the Center.

The ICDAC has also participated actively in many conferences held by other international institutions, such as:

- The International Forum of East-West Dialogue- Barcelona, Spain
- Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures: Comprehension and Mutual Understanding- Liechtenstein
- International Forum on Globalization and a Dialogue among Civilizations-Tbilisi, Georgia
- International Conference on Diversity of Education- Verona, Italy Conference of Islam and democracy- London, England
- Conference of Dialogue among Civilizations- Ukrain
- Dialogue among Civilizations: The Key to the Safe Future- Warsaw, Poland
- Conference on Dialogue of Cultures or Conflict of Civilizations?- Kyrgyzstan
- Dialogue between East and West- Germany
- Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations- Salzburg, Austria
- Dialogue of Religions and Cultures- Nicosia, Cyprus.

### **Participation of ICDAC in International Activities:**

- Cooperation in holding the conference "How to continue Dialogue among Civilizations", Damascus (Financial Contribution)
- Cooperation in the Dialogue among Civilizations Seminar, Bangladesh (Financial Contribution)
- Cooperation with the European Headquarters of the United Nations, Geneva, in an exhibition of Plastic Arts, Ethnic and International Music and Film
- Cooperation with the UNESCO's National Commission in Iran in the publication of the book " Prehistoric Cultures of the Southeast Caspian Coasts to the Bronze Age"

- Cooperation with the International Society for Iranian Culture, New York, in holding the Dialogue among Civilizations Conference titled "Review of Dialogue among Civilizations, a Call for New World Order"
- Cooperation in holding the second seminar of "West & East, Iran & Germany", 2003
- Cooperation with the Japanese Embassy in holding the Symposium titled "Tradition, Modernity and their Interaction"
- Cooperation with the Southern University of Denmark in holding the roundtable titled "Woman and Globalization Summit"

**International organizations with which ICDAC has had joint projects and cooperation:**

- International Academy of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, Warsaw, Poland:
  - Participation in the Academy's conference and submitting articles;
  - Academy's invitation of ICDAC director of International Affairs to deliver his article in the department of Political Science of Poland's Academy of Science
  - Visit of Academy members to Iran to attend the conference entitled: "Role of NGOs in the Realization of Dialogue among Civilizations", held at Tehran University, with ICDAC cooperation;
  - Joint discussion sessions on the future cooperative projects in publications and other joint projects
- Ibn Khaldun Center, Warsaw, Poland:  
This center has proposed several projects to ICDAC, which will probably be carried out in future:
  - Translation of the book "Jame-o-Tavarikh" by Khajeh Rashid-e-Din Fazlollah Hamedani into Polish;
  - Preparing the English Illustrated Series of Ancient Civilizations for publication;
  - Publication of the "Studies on Islam in Europe"
- University of Bonn, Germany:
  - Series of sessions between Iranian and German thinkers in the joint Programme entitled: "Dialogue of East & West: Iran & Germany"
- International Academy of Philosophy, Lichtenstein:
  - Participation in the Academy's conference entitled "Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures; a Way to Mutual Understanding";
- Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Germany:
  - Signing an agreement between this foundation and ICDAC, according to which the two sides will jointly work on several activities such as research projects, seminars, and promotion of Dialogue among Civilizations;
  - ICDAC and this foundation have held joint summits, as well as a joint conference

in Tehran, titled: "Friedrich Nietzsche, the Transnational Philosopher" Stiftung Neuhardenberg,

- Stiftung neuhardenberg, Germany:
  - Numerous discussion sessions between Iranian and German thinkers on "Concepts on Dialogue among Civilizations"
- Institute for a Culture of Peace, Dagestan, Russia:
  - Joint session and agreement on several cultural projects such as cooperation of ICDAC with this Institute on Conflict Resolution Lessons;
- Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation:
  - Several joint sessions on cultural activities, specially with regard to the issue of Dialogue among Civilizations;
- World Economic Forum (WEF):
  - Participation in some of the WEF summits, including the Salzburg Summit (Austria);
- Department of Educational Science, University of Verona, Italy:
  - Participation in the University's conference entitled: "Variety of Educational Systems"

Finally, more detailed information about ICDAC's activities may be found on its website: [www.dialoguecentre.org](http://www.dialoguecentre.org)

### **3.2. Holding Conferences and Meetings:**

After adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilization in November 2001 and up to now, the Islamic Republic of Iran has held numerous conferences and meetings, some of which are as follows:

#### **2001 (November-December):**

International Children and Young Adults' Art Exhibition and Competition (celebrating Dialogue among Civilizations) / Dec.22-Jan.4 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults International Affairs

Seminar on Counter Effects of Arabic and Persian Literature (Past-Present-Future) / Tehran, Iran/ December 6-8, 2001 / Organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Qom's Mofid University

International seminar "Dialogue among Iranian and World Architecture and Urban Planning in the Islamic Era / November 8, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International seminar "Dialogue among Iranian and World Architecture and Urban Planning in Ancient Times / November 7, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International Conference "Dialogue Among Civilizations through Higher Education" / November 5-7, 2001/ Tehran, Iran / Organized by Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP)

International seminar "Exchanges of the Culture of Iranian Architecture and Urban Planning from a Technological Point of View / November 4, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International seminar "Modernity and its Impact on the Culture of Iranian Architecture and Urban Planning" / November 3, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

International seminar "Dialogue among Iranian and World Architecture and Urban Planning in the Islamic Era / November 8, 2001 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC

## **2002:**

The Exhibition of Views: A journey to architectural culture of the nations, November 2 - 5, 2002 / Organized by ICDAC's "Architecture and Urban planning research group" in collaboration with Tehran University's society of architectures engineers and Choghazanbil's company of consultant engineers

International conference on Islam and world peace / October 29-30 / Organized by ICDAC

Professor Alvin Plantinga to come to Iran for a series of lectures / 19-27 October 2002 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC and Qom University

Mysticism: A Bridge Among Cultures (Honoring Ceremony for Prof. Anne Mary Schimmel) / Oct 14-15, 2002 / Allameh Amini Hall, Tehran University, Tehran / Organized by Vice-Chancellor's Office for Research, Tehran University, Alzahra University and ICDAC

1st Educational Seminar on "Dialogue among Civilizations and Global Issues: Simulation of International Talks" / Aug 31 to Sept 3, 2002 / Tehran / Organized by School of International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the UN University

Seminar on "Dialogue among Civilizations and the Nimrooz Civilization's Domain" / June 10-11, 2002 / Zabol, Iran / Organized by ICDAC and the University of Zabol

International seminar on "Centre and Periphery" / May 1-2, 2002 / Isfahan / Organized by ICDAC's department of philosophy and "Farzan rooz" publication

Gathering on Dialogue among Civilizations: Germany and Iran / Bonn museum / Organized by ICDAC

Round table on History, Culture and Dialogue / March 12th, 2002 / Tehran University, College of Literature and Human Sciences, Kamal Hall, Tehran, Iran / Organized by Association of "women researchers in the course of the history" and Tehran University's Faculty of History

Examples of Cultural Exchange between Iran and other Civilizations (Anthropology Articles) / March 5th, 2002 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC, Iranian Sociology Association and Shahid Beheshti University

Gathering on Cross-cultural Dialogue and Different Strata of the society / Mazandaran University / 28 February, 2002

Gathering on Dialogue among Civilizations / 27 February 2002 / Khoozestan, Iran / Organized by ICDAC, Iranian Sociology Association, Shahid Chamran University and Bureau of culture and Islamic guidance

International Seminar on Iran-Austria Architecture & Urban Planning Exchanges / February 24-27, 2002 / Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC, Shahid Beheshti University, Vienna University of Technology, and Institute of X-Change Austria-Iran

Seminar on Socrates, the Philosopher of Dialogue / Feb 24-25, 2002 / Knowledge and Philosophy Association, Tehran, Iran / Organized by ICDAC & Cultural Research Bureau

First Culture and Civilization Festival of Persian Gulf Coast Dwellers/ February 12-March 3, 2002 / Qeshm, Iran / Organized by Qeshm Free Zone Organization in collaboration with Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, University of Science and Technology, Cultural Heritage Organization, and Iran Touring and Tourism Organization

First Conference of Researches on Persian Language and Literature / February 3-4, 2002 / Tarbiat-e Modares University, Tehran, Iran / Organized by Scientific Association of Persian Language and Literature, Academy of Persian Language and Literature, Tarbiat-e Modares University, Islamic Culture and Communication Organization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ICDAC and Channel 4 of IRIB

### 2003:

Roundtable titled Globalization of Economy and Women and its Cultural Aspects / Tehran, Iran / December 13, 2003 / Organized by ICDAC's Political Science Group

Cultural Studies Seminar / Tehran University's Faculty of Social Sciences, Tehran, Iran / December 14-15, 2003 / Organized by and ICDAC's Social Sciences Group

Joint seminar on Cultural Research Book Review / Tehran, Iran / December 16, 2003 / Organized by the Anthropological Research Centre of the Cultural Heritage Organization and ICDAC's Social Science Group

Seminar titled: "Dialogue of East and West – Iran & Germany: Constraints and Possibilities of Cultural Scientific Cooperation in the Age of Globalization" / May 13-14, 2003 / ICDAC Headquarters, Tehran / Organized by ICDAC and the University of Bonn

Workshop on "Political Science and Dialogue of Civilizations" / May 15 - 21, 2003 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC's Political Science Dept.

Lecture entitled "Interpretation of Gathasin the Zoroastrian Religion" by Dr. Hosein Vahidi / April 28, 2003 / ICDAC Library / Organized by ICDAC's Theology & Religions Dept

Dialogue of Religions in Iran's Society – Highlighting the Status of Zoroastrians / February 4, 2003 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC's Social Science Group

Lecture: "David Bohm on Dialogue" / February 18, 2003 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC's Social Science Dept.

#### **2004:**

Conference on the Role of Language in the Dialogue among Civilizations / 24-25 April, 2004 / Isfahan, Iran / Organized by Isfahan University, ICDAC.

Discussion session titled "Rationality in Islam" / Tehran, Iran / January 6, 2004 / Organized by ICDAC's Theology & Religions Dept

Discussion session on Surveying Thousand and One Nights in Iran / Tehran, Iran / January 6, 2004 / Organized by ICDAC's Social Science Dept and CHO's Anthropological Research Centre

Discussion session on "Novel and Psychological Review / Tehran, Iran / January 7, 2004 / Organized by ICDAC's Art & Literature Dept

International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations / Jan 7, 2004 / Tehran, Iran / Organized by the International Association of Universities (IAU)

Discussion session, review of the book: Woman and Power; Jan 13, 2004 / Tehran / Organized by ICDAC Social Science Group and Anthropological Research Center

#### **2005:**

- International Conference on Environment, Peace, and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures<sup>7</sup> (May 9-10, 2005)

The International Conference on Environment, Peace and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, organized jointly by the Department of environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and co-sponsored by the United Nations University (UNU) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was held in Tehran from 9-10 May 2005. It was opened by His Excellency Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Monday, 9 May 2005. Dr. Klaus Toepfer, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP, delivered the message of Mr. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, to the Conference.

<sup>7</sup> . The Dialogue Among Civilizations Bulletin which is a publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has summarized the report of this Conference; VOLUME 108, NO.1, FRIDAY, 13 MAY 2005 and could be reached at:

<http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/ymbvol108num1e.pdf>

Over 70 participants from more than 30 countries participated, including several ministers and other high-level representatives. The purpose of the Conference was to examine the interaction between environment, peace and security in the context of multilateral cultural dialogue among civilizations and discuss the need for multilateralism and meaningful dialogue. The Conference sought to underpin the imperative of multilateralism and meaningful dialogue among civilizations as a means for joint action against dehumanizing poverty, violence, increasing reliance on military might and continued erosion of the democratic practice, both at national and international levels.

The Conference included an introductory session on progress on environment and peace issues and an overview of the nexus between environment, peace and the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples. A special high-level interactive ministerial roundtable was held during the afternoon of Monday, 9 May on the rationale for the Conference, and working sessions were held on Monday and Tuesday focusing on issues surrounding environment and conflict, environment and human security, and dialogue. An interactive discussion on conclusions from the Conference was held on Tuesday afternoon.

The Tehran Conference, a highly analytical gathering of a good number of prominent and well-known academics and experts in the field, and a number of high-level government officials, succeeded in, taking a step further towards exploring the nexus between environment and peace and security. It also addressed the issue of post-conflict reconstruction of environmental damages, and stressed the imperative of development of binding new international legal instruments to ensure environmental integrity during armed conflict.

The Conference also looked into the contribution dialogue proper -hence, dialogue among civilizations and cultures - can and should make towards the promotion of peace and security - as the essential and irreplaceable prerequisite for the effective and meaningful preservation, protection and long-term management of environment. It took as its premise the fundamental concept that genuine dialogue on a global scale, involving all stakeholders and across the board, provides the only way forward towards ensuring meaningful and effective international cooperation, in all fields, including in the field of environment.

The Tehran Conference concluded with a number of practical Conclusions and Recommendations, including at the United Nations and its extended family - which deserve commensurate attention at various levels. It also lent support to the proposals of President Khatami, made at UNESCO, for the establishment of a "Global Forum for the Promotion of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures".

The Conference has also adopted a final document entitled: "Tehran Declaration" which emphasizes that the concept of a new model of dialogue among civilizations and cultures based on mutual respect and recognition must be put in place. In this respect, the Declaration has also highlighted the need for a new model of dialogue in the context of new and devastating environmental threats at a planetary level and goes further to emphasize that the reform process taking place within the United Nations should remain faithful to the spirit of the Charter and genuine multilateralism and provide hope to the international community for a future of effective multilateralism based on mutual understanding, mutual respect, and the principle of dialogue. It should be noted that this Declaration, as an annex to the letter of President Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the UN Secretary General, was released as UN document A/59/825

### **3.3. Promotion of the idea of Dialogue among Civilizations within the framework of the UNESCO**

The quest for a dialogue among civilizations is deeply entrenched in and associated with interaction among civilizations, cultures and nations, especially in a multilateral context. In regard to UNESCO's Constitution and the various programmes and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and General Conference since the establishment of the Organization, the promotion of dialogue in the service of peace – in order to build “peace in the minds of men” – is clearly one of the main themes of UNESCO's mission. Globalization and the emergence of new contemporary challenges and threats to humankind make the need for dialogue among civilizations ever more topical. A principal objective of a dialogue is to bridge the gap in knowledge about other civilizations, cultures and societies, to lay the foundations for dialogue based on universally shared values and to undertake concrete activities, inspired and driven by dialogue, especially in the areas of education, cultural diversity and heritage, the sciences and communication and media.

In past years and especially so since the tragic events of September 11 2001, the activities promoting a dialogue among civilizations have attracted renewed attention at UNESCO. Though this has been an effort of long standing in its work Programme, it has received new impetus through the resolution by UNESCO's General Conference on the fight against terrorism, adopted in November 2001.

Promoting dialogue among civilizations and cultures is indeed a key component of UNESCO's mission and activities. In UNESCO's medium-term strategy for 2002-2007 (document 31 C/4), the dialogue among civilizations has been designated as one of only twelve strategic objectives for the Organization, within the Programme defined for Culture. Reference to the pivotal role of the dialogue among civilizations is also well anchored in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

More recently, UNESCO aims to broaden the scope of the dialogue and to make it more relevant to contemporary threats and challenges, facing international community, by reviewing and assessing the concept and past approaches, identifying and overcoming obstacles to dialogue, including new and old ignorance and prejudices, potentially leading to new fractures and conflicts, especially at local and community levels.

#### **Participation in conferences**

During the UN Year itself and since then, many conferences and meetings have been organized exploring the meaning of dialogue and its importance. Few examples are referred to hereunder:

The conference held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in April 2001 provided a valuable opportunity for regional leaders and representatives to discuss key issues. This opportunity occurred again on the other side of the world when UNESCO and the United Nations University organized an international conference on the theme of dialogue among civilizations in Tokyo in July 2001, as well as other conferences in Vietnam, Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan, Albania and the UN headquarters. The Islamic Republic of Iran, through its Permanent Delegation to UNESCO has participated and played an active role either through helping organize them or actively participate in the debates.

International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples was held at UNESCO Headquarter on April 5, 2005 in which more than 300 participants, including eminent academics and decisions makers from the Arab region, Asia, Europe and the United States attended. During the Conference, the Director-General of UNESCO praised President Khatami, for first launching "the political and intellectual movement which re-introduced dialogue as a central notion for the management of world affairs," leading to the proclamation of 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilization. "Such dialogue," Mr Matsuura continued, "must by necessity be soundly based on democracy, human rights and basic liberties, the sole guarantors of lasting peace and development and indispensable conditions for reconciliation."

During the conference, speakers and participants paid tribute to Pope John Paul II and to his contribution to dialogue, peace and understanding.

In his keynote address, President Khatami praised UNESCO's contribution to dialogue among civilizations, highlighting UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (adopted in 2003), its Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (adopted in 2001), the preparation of a convention on cultural diversity, and ongoing work on the ethics of science.

The events of September 2001, President Khatami argued, proved that "dialogue among civilizations had become a political and economic emergency." The President went on to explain that while civilizations have been influencing one another for millennia, the notion of dialogue was novel in that it implied a "conscious character". "It is possible to influence, or be influenced, unawares, while the definition of dialogue, by necessity, requires conscious communication."

Pleading for the moralization of politics, the President argued that "The political translation of dialogue among civilizations would consist in arguing that culture, morality and art must prevail on politics. [...] As long as politics remain estranged from morality and impervious to culture [...] human rights will not be defended..."

President Khatami insisted that "dialogue among civilizations signifies, politically, the rejection of terrorism and violence. [...] It also embodies the fight against a long list of ills that affect humanity as a whole such as the terrible hunger that is afflicting the world, killing children and adults, growing environmental degradation, threats against the family, moral permissiveness, and the deprivation of entire regions from education resources for children and adolescents."

President Khatami launched the idea of creating a non-governmental organization to promote dialogue among civilizations and said he would welcome suggestions and proposals for this project.<sup>8</sup>

In his keynote address, the President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, said that by attending the conference he meant to add his voice to those of "men and women who believe deeply in a less uncertain future for our world. [...] Dialogue among civilizations is one of the motors of progress," President Bouteflika said, "It allows for the dissemination of innovations produced within each of them. It is the vector of the perfectability of human kind as a whole, of the never-ending task of humanizing humanity."

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<sup>8</sup> The Statement of H.E. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been issued as United Nations Document: A/60/77

"Terrorism is not part of the matrix of Moslem civilization," declared President Bouteflika. "Nothing can justify this murderous folly and senseless slaughter. [...] Nothing in the recent or distant past, nor in the present, can give substance to the idea of a shock of civilizations between the two shores of the Mediterranean. The two civilizations have lived together - peacefully for the most part, only exceptionally and marginally in a brutal manner - in relations of mutual influence and dialogue, more or less active according to the period. Each partner has been in turn master and student, adapting domestically the innovations that seemed most suitable, even when, at the outset, they had been imposed by force."

President Bouteflika denounced the "technological monopoly exercised by a very small number of States that impose their digital language on the rest of the planet which, impotent and passive, consumes the products of these new technologies."

Following the keynote addresses, participants engaged in a question and answer session with the presidents.

### **3.4. Working with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)**

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) welcomed, in July 1, 1999, the Tehran Declaration on Dialogue among Civilizations, issued at the Islamic Symposium on Dialogue among Civilizations. This Declaration encompasses general principle, as well as areas of dialogue among civilizations, participants in dialogue, mechanisms for the promotion of the culture of dialogue among civilizations and also application of dialogue among civilizations to critical areas of international relations. Furthermore and with a view to translating these commitments to action, the Declaration directed methodology, mechanisms, structures and financing of the dialogue and mandated the Secretary-General of the OIC to designate a focal point to actively pursue the dialogue among civilizations. A high level group of governmental experts also convened. This group prepared the draft Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations which was adopted by the Twenty-seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in June 2000, before submitting it to the United Nations General Assembly for adoption.

Furthermore and after the adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among civilizations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has actively contributed to the implementation of this Global Agenda. In this regard, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in partnership with other organizations and institutions held a number of pertinent Conferences to improve the culture of dialogue among civilizations and explore new theoretical and practical inputs for strengthening this culture as a prevailing discourse among nations. ISESCO believes, as its Director General has emphasized that: "Dialogue among civilizations reflects a pressing need, dictated by the accelerating world mutations prevailing at this critical juncture of world history. It has become a strategic option, mandated by the major challenges confronting the international community, for it constitutes the noblest means of coexistence among nations and peoples, indeed the remedy to all factors of tension and conflict at the origin of international crises."

Throughout all this process and efforts of the OIC, the Islamic Republic of Iran has played an active role. Following is a brief chronological report on this contribution by the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- 25-27 June 2002: The 29th ICFM, by virtue of operative paragraph 1 of its resolution No. 57/29-P on the issue, the draft of which had been submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran, decided to establish a high-level open-ended Committee to draw up a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the relevant OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions and its submission to the next session of the ICFM for approval.
- 28-30 May 2003: The 30<sup>th</sup> ICFM in the Islamic Republic of Iran, by adopting resolutions No. 43/30-P on the subject, called for the convening of the meeting of the abovementioned Committee to draw up the supposed plan and submit it to the 31st ICFM for approval.
- 16-17 October 2003: The 10th Islamic Summit Conference adopted resolutions No. 42/10-P (IS) on the subject. The Summit Conference in its resolution called for the convening of the meeting of the abovementioned Committee to draw up the supposed plan and submit it to the 31st ICFM for approval.
- 6-7 April 2004: the high-level open-ended Committee to draw up a comprehensive plan for the implementation of the relevant OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations was convened at the OIC Headquarters under the Chairmanship of the Islamic Republic of Iran and finalized the text of a "comprehensive plan for the implementation of the OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations." (OIC/IGGED AC/2004/REP/FINAL) The Group submitted the aforementioned document to the 31st ICFM for its approval.
- 14-16 June 2004: The 31st ICFM by virtue of its Resolution No. 49/31-P on the subject adopted the comprehensive plan for the implementation of the OIC and UN General Assembly resolutions on Dialogue among Civilizations, as one of the reference executive documents with respect to the issue of Dialogue among Civilizations.
- 8-9 March 2005: Third Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among the OIC Member States was convened in the Islamic Republic of Iran and adopted "the Principles and Guidelines for the Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among OIC Member States" as a basic document for promoting dialogue and confidence among Islamic countries. The aforesaid document, the draft of which has been prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran, was submitted to the 32nd ICFM for its approval.
- 30 April-2 May 2005: The meeting of the Senior Officials of the OIC Member States, preparatory to the 32nd ICFM, by virtue of draft resolution No. 12/32-P, adopted "the Principles and Guidelines for the Promotion of Dialogue, Cooperation and Confidence among OIC Member States",
- 3-5 May 2005: The 28th Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs preparatory to the 32nd ICFM, by adopting a draft resolution on Dialogue among Civilizations submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran, welcomed and supported the intention of H.E. President Mohammad Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a Center for Dialogue among Civilizations and express the readiness of the relevant bodies of the OIC System for close cooperation with that Center in realizing its objectives.



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### Sixtieth session

Items 122 and 123 of the provisional agenda\*

### Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and  
financial functioning of the United Nations

## Measures to strengthen accountability at the United Nations

### Report of the Secretary-General\*\*

#### *Summary*

The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 59/272 of 23 December 2004, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit annually to it a report on measures implemented aimed at strengthening accountability in the Secretariat. The report comes at a time when the United Nations has faced an unprecedented series of organizational challenges. In response to these challenges, the Secretary-General has revisited the existing mechanisms of accountability and oversight and developed a set of measures based on three main pillars, namely, accountability; transparency; and ethics.

The report outlines these new measures, and others that were already initiated, and presents them under the following thematic headings: measures for strengthening the accountability framework; strengthening the oversight mechanisms; ensuring ethical conduct; enhancing transparency; and other measures. In addition, the report responds to two other requests of the General Assembly, as contained in its resolutions 59/264 A of 23 December 2004 and 59/264 B of 22 June 2005, namely: to report, respectively, on (a) an analysis of experiences with audit committees derived from a review conducted by the Secretariat; and (b) progress made on indicating time frames for the implementation of the recommendations of oversight bodies, both of which are an integral part of the measures being taken to improve accountability.

\* A/60/150.

\*\* Owing to extensive consultations, submission of the present report was delayed.



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## I. Introduction

1. The present report has been submitted pursuant to paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 59/272 of 23 December 2004, in which the Assembly mandated the Secretary-General to submit annually to the Assembly a report under the agenda item entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations" addressing the measures aimed at strengthening accountability in the Secretariat. This report also responds to paragraph 11 of resolution 59/264 A of 23 December 2004 and paragraph 7 of resolution 59/264 B of 22 June 2005, in which the Assembly called, respectively, for an assessment of the experiences of audit committees within the United Nations system and other international organizations, and an assessment of progress achieved towards assigning time frames for the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

2. Since the submission to the General Assembly of the last report of the Secretary-General entitled "Accountability and responsibility" (A/55/270 of 3 August 2000), there have been continuing efforts to strengthen accountability at the United Nations. However, the Secretariat is now facing an unprecedented series of organizational challenges which have exposed shortcomings in the way it conducts its business. The Secretary-General is therefore taking additional actions where it is within his authority to do so, particularly in the critical areas of the accountability framework, oversight, ethics and transparency.

3. This report is organized into six parts covering the following headings: measures for strengthening the accountability framework; assessment of experiences with audit committees, establishment of oversight mechanisms; ensuring ethical conduct; enhancing transparency, and timely implementation of recommendations of the oversight bodies.

## II. Measures to strengthen the accountability framework

4. The accountability framework at the United Nations is based on a hierarchy headed by the General Assembly that flows through the Secretary-General, senior managers and middle management to all other staff. Annex I to this report provides a schematic representation of this structure and the mechanisms that support it. At each level in the hierarchy, it is essential that there be clearly defined responsibilities and performance expectations and that there be mechanisms in place that enable both routine and formal assessment of performance. The measures described in the present section of this report are aimed at ensuring that: (a) the Secretary-General receives the necessary advice to properly assess the performance of senior managers; (b) executive-level decisions are clearly understood and followed up; (c) senior managers understand what is expected from them; and (d) the mechanism for formal appraisal of all staff, including managers, is improved.

### A. Reconstituting of the Accountability Panel as the Management Performance Board

5. Through the promulgation of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2005/13, which took effect from 13 May 2005, the Secretary-General has replaced the

Accountability Panel with the Management Performance Board. The Board's terms of reference and responsibilities are clearer and better defined than those of the Panel. The Board will advise the Secretary-General on matters concerning the performance of individual senior managers. Its functions include reviewing the material recommendations of the Oversight Committee (see sect. IV of this report) and ensuring that managers act on serious managerial issues identified by its oversight bodies. It will also monitor the manner in which senior managers exercise all aspects of the authority that has been delegated to them, including their performance in achieving the objectives contained in human resources action plans, and review the outcome of the administration of justice proceedings in the Secretariat for management accountability purposes.

6. The members of the Management Performance Board will be appointed by the Secretary-General for a two-year term, which may be renewable. Its membership will consist of a chairperson, who will be the Deputy Secretary-General, two members at the Under-Secretary-General level and an external expert in public sector management.

7. In July 2005, the Deputy Secretary-General chaired the first organizational meeting of the Management Performance Board, which conducted a review of existing sources of managerial performance data. The Department of Management was requested to review methods of performance assessments used in other comparable organizations, with a view to preparing proposals for a set of qualitative and quantitative performance indicators covering both programmatic and managerial functions that would enable a high-level evaluation of a senior manager's performance. The Board is expected to consider these proposals at its next meeting in the fourth quarter of 2005.

## **B. Improving executive-level decision-making**

8. Recognizing the value in having the ability to take high-level decisions on a timely basis and in an effort to ensure that mechanisms would be in place to hold senior management accountable for follow-up action, the Secretary-General established a Senior Management Group as part of his initial reform programme in 1997. The Group comprised all heads of Secretariat departments and United Nations offices, funds and programmes. As a result, coordination and coherence within the United Nations family have since been enhanced. In practice, however, while having real utility as an information-sharing body, the Group has proved too large for effective and timely decision-making. Consequently, two smaller senior-level committees, a Policy Committee and a Management Committee — both chaired by the Secretary-General — have been created. The modus operandi of these Committees will ensure clear expectations, and clear definition of responsibility and timelines for implementation. As of 30 June 2005, the Policy Committee had met on six occasions since its establishment in May 2005 and has presented the Secretary-General with policy options on a wide range of issues. The Management Committee held its first meeting on 20 May 2005 to review progress made to date on management reform and later met in July 2005 to endorse a number of reform proposals.

### **C. Introducing mandatory induction programmes for senior officials**

9. A more robust approach to ensuring that senior officials are adequately informed on the broader system of United Nations regulations and rules, code of conduct and managerial systems is required. To meet this need, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations piloted its first induction session in June 2005 for a group of newly appointed leaders in a number of field missions. The programme, which is intended to be conducted biannually, will cover sessions on conduct and requirements for management performance. At the same time, a broader induction programme for senior-level recruits is being developed in the rest of the United Nations Secretariat. It is expected that this will be launched by the end of 2005. A consolidated reference guide on delegation of authority has been prepared and will act both as a training aid during the induction programmes and as a reference document designed to clarify the responsibilities that are delegated to senior officials.

### **D. Defining performance expectations for programme delivery**

10. An essential component of the accountability framework is the clear and meaningful measurement of programme delivery. To this end, as part of the Secretary-General's first round of reforms, results-based budgeting was introduced. A comprehensive set of performance indicators for all programmes, including peacekeeping missions, have now been developed. For the programme budget for 2004-2005 and the proposed programme budget for 2006-2007, performance measures, namely, baselines and targets, have also been included.

11. To gain maximum benefit from these performance indicators, monitoring and evaluation are being enhanced. The Office of Internal Oversight Services presented its latest recommendations on this subject to the General Assembly in its reports on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives (see A/59/79) and further specific proposals (which were prepared jointly with the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)) on the strengthening and monitoring of programme performance and evaluation (A/60/73). The measures being implemented will include improvements in data-collection and monitoring systems and strengthening of self-evaluation. Programme managers are required to include in their budget proposals for the biennium 2006-2007 adequate resources to effectively evaluate their programme performance.

12. The improvements in monitoring and evaluation combined with the performance indicators contained in the biennial programme plan and the programme budget will provide the basis for objective reporting of performance both to Member States through the programme performance report and to the new Management Performance Board. These inputs, together with the independent inspection and evaluation reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and JIU, will put the Board in a position to provide the Secretary-General with the advice he needs to hold his senior managers accountable for the results they achieve in delivering their work programmes.

## **E. Enhancing the Performance Appraisal System**

13. As part of the overall accountability framework, the e-PAS is the formal tool employed in holding staff accountable for their performance. The system has the basic objective of creating a fair, equitable, transparent and measurable system of performance management in support of a results-based culture that recognizes and rewards excellent performance while adequately addressing underperformance. The system applies to all staff and managers except the heads of departments who are currently subject to annual assessment through their programme management plans. The e-PAS represents an enhancement of the original Performance Appraisal System (PAS), and was introduced after extensive consultations throughout the Secretariat. Incorporated into the revised e-PAS system are the following features:

- (a) The organizational core values and competencies, in order to provide a fuller picture of performance;
- (b) Self-assessment by staff members;
- (c) The managerial competencies for supervisory staff so as to provide an assessment of their supervisory skills;
- (d) Strengthened links between performance management and career development;
- (e) Enhanced accountability measures such as the inclusion of an optional section in the e-PAS for the comments of staff on supervision received.

## **F. Requiring personal financial liability of staff**

14. The Secretary-General has defined the conditions, through staff rules 112.3, 212.2 and 312.2, under which staff members may be required to reimburse the United Nations, either partially or in full, for any financial loss suffered by the Organization as a result of the staff member's gross negligence or violation of the regulations and procedures. To that end, administrative instruction ST/AI/2004/3 of 29 September 2004 was promulgated. The instructions also define the conditions for implementing financial rule 101.2, under which any staff member who violates the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations (ST/SGB/2003/7) or corresponding administrative instructions, may be held personally accountable and financially liable for his or her actions.

## **III. Assessment of experience with audit and oversight committees within the United Nations system and other international organizations**

15. At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly, in paragraph 11 of its resolution 59/264 A, having taken note of the Secretariat's effort in collecting information on the experiences of audit committees within the United Nations system and other international organizations, requested the Secretary-General to report on and provide an assessment of its findings to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

16. The Secretariat collected the information on audit committees during 2004. Thirty-three organizations were involved, grouped in four categories: specialized agencies and related organizations; funds and programmes; multinational financial institutions; and other international organizations. The Secretariat's analysis revealed that 60 per cent of the organizations involved in the survey had already established an oversight mechanism (see annex II). These oversight mechanisms were referred to as either audit committees or oversight committees. It is worth noting that even the organizations that do not have an institutionalized audit committee have set up mechanisms to review internal and external audit matters as well as progress made in implementing audit recommendations. In some of these cases, it is the relevant programme and budget committee that plays this role.

17. When considering the role of the audit committees within an organization, it is important to recognize the distinction between the committees that operate as advisory panels to either the respective executive heads or the executive boards and those that are part of the governing body of the organization. The latter is the case in most of the multinational financial institutions like the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

18. The responsibilities of the oversight committees generally include:

- (a) Reviewing the strategy and workplans of internal and, in some organizations, external audit; and discussing the scope and content of their audits so as to identify audit priorities and suggesting potential audit areas within which to address the organization's risks;

- (b) Reviewing the findings and recommendations emanating from the reports, inspection and investigations, including those on irregularities and fraud;

- (c) Ensuring that appropriate and timely actions are taken by the management in implementing the recommendations of the internal and external oversight bodies and monitoring follow-up action thereon.

19. In addition, other responsibilities of some of the committees include:

- (a) Assessing the integrity of the financial statements of the organizations and their accounting, financial reporting and disclosure policies and practices;

- (b) Reviewing risk management and the internal control system;

- (c) Making recommendations with regard to the appointments and tenure of members of the external board of auditors;

- (d) Assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of internal and external audit services;

- (e) Providing an open avenue of communication between the governing board, management and the functions of internal and external audit;

- (f) Serving as an issue resolution forum in cases where there are differences in respect of opinions or recommendations between managers and auditors or investigators, or among the auditors themselves;

- (g) Promoting an organization-wide culture that accepts the importance and value of the internal audit, inspection and investigation functions and providing

executive heads with the assurance that these functions are operating effectively and efficiently.

### **Composition**

20. In general, the membership of the committees ranges from six to nine members, primarily high-ranking or senior management officers. However, external (United Nations or non-United Nations) members are strategically included either because of their present position as is the case at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or because of their professional qualifications, expertise and/or competence as is the case at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). External members usually serve for a two-year renewable term.

### **Meetings**

21. The committees generally meet up to four times per annum. However the chairperson in most cases possesses the discretionary authority to call additional meetings if deemed appropriate, for example, to initiate discussion of emerging audit matters. The executive head in some instances can also request that the chairperson convene a meeting.

### **Reporting**

22. The committees generally report to either the executive head or to the governing body (for example, the executive council). It is worth noting that the committees within the United Nations system generally report to their executive heads, while the committees within the multinational financial institutions and other international organizations report to their executive boards.

## **IV. Strengthening of the oversight mechanisms**

23. Independent oversight is an essential part of any comprehensive system of accountability. At the United Nations, there are three main bodies that provide this function, namely, the Board of Auditors, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and JIU. Without the audit of financial statements, the investigation of complaints, the evaluation of programme performance, and all the other reviews carried out by these bodies, both internal management and the governing bodies would not have an impartial assessment of the functioning of the Organization or, where shortcomings are identified, be in a position to hold accountable those responsible. It is therefore essential that the oversight bodies be independent, have the capacity to carry out their functions, and provide full coverage of all aspects of the functioning of the Organization. It is also essential that effective follow-up action be taken on the basis of their findings, including implementation of recommendations and analysis of their reports, to address systemic weaknesses. The measures described in the present section of this report address these issues.

## **A. Establishment of the United Nations Oversight Committee**

24. As has been described in section III of this report, the Secretariat initiated a review of audit committees in order to establish a similar body at the United Nations. Pursuant to the initiation of this review, the General Assembly, in resolution 59/272 of 23 December 2004, requested the establishment of a high-level follow-up mechanism under the authority of the Secretary-General to effectively feed findings and recommendations of the oversight bodies into the executive management processes.

25. Utilizing the findings of the Secretariat's review, terms of reference for a United Nations Oversight Committee have been prepared and are ready for issuance. The Oversight Committee will function as an independent advisory panel to the Secretary-General. Its objectives include ensuring the systematic implementation of recommendations of the oversight bodies; sharing audit-related information and lessons learned within the Secretariat, where appropriate; and ensuring that significant risks to the Organization are identified and mitigating measures taken. Its responsibilities will include:

(a) Ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken by the relevant managers to rectify problems in areas of concern identified by oversight bodies, and to effectively manage risks within the organization;

(b) Alerting the Secretary-General on systemic organizational issues that may arise from audit, investigation or evaluation reports, and making recommendations as appropriate;

(c) On behalf of the Secretary-General, providing advice and suggestions on the priorities, long-term strategy and annual audit workplans of oversight bodies and requesting that significant risks identified be included in such workplans;

(d) Preparing the Secretary-General's response to reports of oversight bodies submitted to the General Assembly, taking into account the input provided by the departments or offices concerned;

(e) Rendering advice on audit related-matters to the Secretary-General and departmental heads as it deems appropriate;

(f) Encouraging and facilitating, if necessary, collaboration and cooperation among the various oversight bodies.

26. The Secretary-General will appoint a Chairperson and three additional members to the Committee. The Chairperson and two of the members will be senior Secretariat officials at a rank no lower than that of Assistant Secretary-General. The other member will be external to the Secretariat. Members of the Committee shall serve for a period of two years, renewable once, with the renewal period phased so as to provide continuity. Committee members shall act in an independent capacity while performing their advisory role on the Committee. The Committee shall meet at the request of the Chairperson or any member as required but no less than once every calendar quarter. The Under-Secretary-General for Management will attend meetings in an ex officio capacity.

27. The Committee is required to produce an annual report on its work for the previous year, which will be presented to the Secretary-General during the first calendar quarter of each year. The Committee will also contribute to the annual

report to the General Assembly on measures taken to improve accountability in the Secretariat.

28. It should be noted that some of the functions identified during the review of the audit committees of other organizations have not been included in the terms of reference of the Oversight Committee. These would include making recommendations on the resource requirements of the various oversight bodies; assessment of the efforts of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Board of Auditors and JIU to strengthen the Organization's internal controls; and the identification of possible gaps in the United Nations oversight coverage. It is considered that these functions would not be appropriately discharged by a committee reporting directly to the Secretary-General. However, additional strengthening of United Nations oversight is currently under discussion in the General Assembly.

## **B. Enhancement of fraud and corruption prevention mechanisms**

29. In paragraph 349 of volume I of the report of the Board of Auditors (A/59/5 (vol. I), chap. I), the Board recommended, inter alia, that the Administration:

(a) Implement a comprehensive and well-communicated corruption and fraud prevention plan in the United Nations system;

(b) Establish a corruption and fraud prevention committee that would serve as an effective framework and coordination point for a United Nations system corruption and fraud prevention mechanism;

(c) Conduct ethics, corruption and fraud awareness training sessions and workshops among managers, international and local employees and other stakeholders;

(d) Develop appropriate resolution mechanisms for reported and detected incidents and allegations of corruption and fraud.

A clarification was obtained from the Board that the word "system" mentioned in its recommendation referred to the United Nations and its funds and programmes.

30. The United Nations already has in place many rules, procedures and controls designed to prevent fraud and corruption. However, based on the Board's recommendation, new efforts have been initiated to draw a more comprehensive plan, addressing all aspects of corruption and fraud prevention. To that end, a working group has been established to propose such a plan. As a first step, the working group is drawing up an anti-corruption and fraud prevention policy which will draw on existing best practices, including the model recently developed by the World Bank.

31. The working group will also propose an effective mechanism through which to coordinate the efforts on corruption and fraud prevention of the United Nations and its funds and programmes.

32. A training programme will be part of the overall corruption and fraud prevention plan. It will include general awareness training, as well as specific modules for functions where the risk of fraud and corruption is higher. The programme will address staff at all levels of the Organization.

### **C. Efforts to strengthen the Office of Internal Oversight Services**

33. The Office of Internal Oversight Services in its tenth annual report to the General Assembly (see A/59/359) provided the results of its own self-evaluation to assist the Assembly in carrying out its review and evaluation of the Office in 2004. The self-evaluation exercise looked at strengths and weaknesses and pointed to areas where the Office could be improved. In addition, in his note transmitting the annual report to the Assembly, the Secretary-General recommended to the Assembly that the Office undergo a comprehensive external review in order to strengthen its capacity to carry out all aspects of its work. That recommendation was reiterated in paragraph 192 of the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

34. The General Assembly in paragraph 11 of its resolution 59/272 affirmed that any external review of the Office of Internal Oversight Services could be undertaken only by such bodies as the Board of Auditors or JIU, or those mandated to do so by the Assembly. It is recommended that the scope of such a review should include the investigation processes at offices away from Headquarters as recommended by the Board.

35. Apart from any external review that may be undertaken as a result of the Secretary-General's proposals above, measures have already been taken to strengthen the investigation function of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. In resolution 59/287 of 13 April 2005, the General Assembly re-emphasized that the Office was the internal body entrusted with investigation in the United Nations and therefore decided that the results of all preliminary investigations conducted by programme managers should be reported to the Office. Pursuant to the adoption of this resolution, the Office now has independent, residual and exclusive authority to investigate the most serious cases (all "category one" cases, that is to say, all high-risk, complex matters and serious criminal cases). An added layer of oversight determines that the Office must be informed of the results of all "category two" cases (cases of lower risk to the Organization) investigated by programme managers, so that the Office can have an overview of all matters that have been investigated by the Organization.

### **D. Review of governance structures and the format of accountability reports**

36. The way in which financial reports and reports of oversight bodies are considered and acted upon represents an essential part of the accountability process. Recognizing this, the General Assembly in paragraph 6 of its resolution 57/278 A of 20 December 2002 (later reaffirmed in resolution 59/264 A) requested the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the funds and programmes of the United Nations to examine governance structures, principles and accountability throughout the United Nations system and to make proposals on the future format and consideration of the reports of the Board of Auditors by the respective executive boards and the Assembly. The matter was taken up and discussed by the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) at its eighth session, held in Rome on 5 and 6 October 2004. At that session, the Committee decided that, in the first instance, this item should be carried forward by the Finance and Budget Network, in particular as regards format and consideration of the reports of the Board of

Auditors, and requested that the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) carry out consultations with the Board of Auditors and obtain more detailed information on the scope and objectives of this review (see CEB/2004/6, para. 60). Member States are currently seized with the subject of strengthening governance arrangements in the context of the discussions on the outcome document for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the Assembly.

37. Related to this subject is the recommendation of the Board of Auditors that covered the issue of governance principles and best practices related to financial reporting. It pointed out that in its view, the following governance issues were normally reported on in a medium such as the financial report that preceded the financial statements: (a) governance and other regulatory bodies; (b) performance reporting and non-financial information; (c) social accounting issues; and (d) risk management, continuity and internal control (A/59/5/Add.2, chap. II, para. 25).

38. At its ninth session held at Geneva in April 2005, the High-level Committee on Management decided to set up a working group to examine current accountability mechanisms in organizations, to raise awareness of such tools and to identify best practices (see CEB/2005/3, para. 22 (f)). It was recognized that this issue was very broad and was related to overall organizational culture and not just audit processes (*ibid.*, para. 21). Therefore, the working group will comprise representatives of budget, finance and human resources management. The terms of reference of this working group will, *inter alia*, include addressing the resolutions and recommendations referred to in paragraphs 36 and 37 above.

## **V. Ensuring ethical conduct**

39. The commitment to the highest ethical standards at the United Nations is a core value and fundamental guiding principle in ensuring that the Organization achieves its mission. In response to the findings of a Secretariat-wide staff survey, the probes into the management of the oil-for-food programme and the allegations of sexual misconduct in various peace missions, the United Nations has begun implementing additional measures to address deficiencies and ensure a culture of ethical conduct.

### **A. Proposed establishment of the United Nations Office of Ethics**

40. Underlying the main effort of the Secretariat in that regard is the proposal for the establishment of an independent Office of Ethics, the head of which will report directly to the Secretary-General. The objective of the Office will be to assist the Organization in maintaining the highest standards of integrity, as required by the Charter of the United Nations and thereby maintain and enhance international confidence in the United Nations through fostering a culture of ethical conduct, transparency and accountability, setting and disseminating standards for appropriate professional conduct and providing leadership, management and oversight of the United Nations ethics infrastructure. Proposals for the establishment of the Office of Ethics, along with its terms of reference, are currently under preparation for the consideration of the General Assembly.

## **B. Financial disclosure by senior officials**

41. In July 2005, the Secretary-General decided to broaden the scope of financial disclosure, as currently required of senior officials, including those employed on a short-term basis or under special conditions. This followed a review of disclosure practices in comparable organizations. The appropriate mechanisms for monitoring these disclosures are also under review for immediate strengthening. It is envisaged that the scope of annual financial disclosure and declaration of interest will be broadened from the Assistant Secretary-General/Under-Secretary-General level to include all staff at the D-1 level and above. The financial disclosure threshold levels will be lowered for assets and income from \$25,000 to \$10,000 and for gifts from \$10,000 to \$250.

42. The financial disclosure programme will be administered by the proposed Office of Ethics, pursuant to its establishment. The implementation of the expanded financial disclosure regime will require an amendment of staff regulation 1.2 (n) by the General Assembly.

## **C. Protection against retaliation for exposure of wrongdoing or reporting of irregularities and misconduct**

43. The Secretary-General is finalizing a comprehensive policy to ensure protection against retaliation for reporting of alleged misconduct. This policy will complement existing administrative issuances concerning avenues for the reporting of alleged misconduct that are set out in information circular ST/IC/2005/19. It is essential that staff have confidence in these mechanisms and assurance that the appropriate level of protection is provided. For this reason, additional rounds of consultation with the staff have been conducted on the terms of the new policy.

## **D. Enhancement of codes of conduct and conflict-of-interest rules**

44. While the United Nations has in place a detailed Code of Conduct readily available to all staff on the Intranet, it is now planned to disseminate the Code in other ways. The Secretary-General has commissioned the design of a user-friendly orientation and information booklet for distribution in the latter part of 2005 to all staff based on the Secretary-General's bulletin on the status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members (ST/SGB/2002/13). Special additional rules are also being developed for staff engaged in procurement activities. In this respect, a Declaration of Independence to be signed by all staff members working in the procurement process has been prepared and an administrative issuance on rules governing the conduct of staff engaged in procurement activities is being finalized for adoption by the Secretary-General. A United Nations Supplier Code of Conduct is also being formulated. It is expected that all these materials will be produced and ready for dissemination in the near future.

45. The Office of Ethics, once established, will be responsible for standard-setting on ethics issues and training, in coordination with the Office of Human Resources Management.

### **E. Incorporation of ethics into staff training programmes**

46. Staff will be required to complete a new downloadable content module on integrity and ethics provisions for self-training that has now been completed in the form of a CD-ROM. In addition, ethics modules have been incorporated into all existing training programmes for United Nations staff, including at induction, and the Career Resources Centre (CRC) offers a lunchtime programme on ethics. It is envisaged that both the CD-ROM on integrity and the Career Resources Centre ethics programme will be mandatory for all staff.

### **F. Protection against harassment in the workplace**

47. While the United Nations has a zero tolerance sexual harassment policy in place, the Secretary-General is in the process of formulating a new, broader policy to encompass other forms of harassment. This will be introduced following consultation with the staff representative bodies. The United Nations Secretariat has also joined the United Nations Development Group in the development and implementation of an online learning programme on harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, which, once available, will be mandatory for all staff.

### **G. Response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by field personnel**

48. In addition to the efforts in place for dealing with the issues of harassment and sexual misconduct, in response to the widespread allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse at some United Nations peacekeeping operations, there has been aggressive pursuit by the Organization of such cases. As of July 2005, across all peacekeeping operations, 186 peacekeepers had been investigated for sexual exploitation and abuse; 7 United Nations civilians had been summarily dismissed; and 80 members of military contingents had been expelled from the field missions. Investigations into such allegations are ongoing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Haiti in particular. Additionally, a number of short- and medium-term initiatives are under way, including:

(a) The introduction of a unified standard of conduct across all categories of peacekeeping personnel. Mandatory training on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse has been integrated into all mission induction programmes. Improved complaint mechanisms have been established in all missions, including telephone hotlines and a network of Focal Points for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, who receive complaints in person. In addition, missions are ensuring that victims of sexual abuse are referred to existing emergency assistance (medical, psychosocial, legal) in the mission area;

(b) A global review of the state of discipline in peacekeeping operations conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the results of which are currently being analysed;

(c) The establishment by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of a Conduct and Discipline Unit at United Nations Headquarters. Over the coming months, similar capacity will be created in eight Department of Peacekeeping

Operations missions. The Units will focus on preventing misconduct through various means, including awareness-raising and training and improving welfare and recreation facilities. Other key activities of such Units will include tracking data on misconduct cases for all categories of peacekeeping personnel and developing measures to ensure compliance with United Nations standards of conduct, such as the establishment of lists of premises considered out of bounds for United Nations personnel. Such Units will work with in-country networks on sexual exploitation and abuse, developed to better coordinate and share information on this problem;

(d) The approval by the General Assembly in June 2005 of 19 new Office of Internal Oversight Services investigator positions, as well as additional investigative resources for following up allegations of misconduct in peacekeeping missions.

49. In the longer term, a comprehensive review will be undertaken of the welfare and recreation needs of all peacekeeping personnel, as well as the development of a comprehensive strategy for victim assistance. New agreements with troop-contributing countries and United Nations partners will be developed. In addition, a group of legal experts will be examining ways to ensure that United Nations staff and experts on mission are held responsible for criminal acts committed in countries where no functioning judicial system exists.

#### **H. Dissemination of information concerning the Secretary-General's decisions in disciplinary matters**

50. Starting in 2002, two information circulars (ST/IC/2002/25 and ST/IC/2004/28) were issued that informed all staff of the Secretary-General's practice in disciplinary matters. It is expected that the sharing of information with staff members concerning decisions on disciplinary cases will not only raise awareness and enhance transparency in disciplinary matters, but also have a deterrent effect and thus enhance ethical conduct.

### **VI. Enhancing transparency**

51. Transparency is an essential feature of any system of accountability. By making decision-making processes, performance data, transaction processing, and general information about the Organization more accessible, the United Nations becomes more accountable to Member States, staff and civil society. A major vehicle for improving transparency has been Internet technology, and the United Nations home page has been enhanced during the last few years to become a strategic communication tool. Efforts are also ongoing to increase awareness inside the United Nations of Intranet capabilities, and build on existing features, such as the Procurement and Facilities Management tracking systems, that give transparency to administrative processes. In addition to the continuous expansion of the Intranet, Extranet and Internet, there are other measures aimed at improving the openness of the operation of the United Nations, which are described below.

## **A. Access to United Nations information**

52. The Secretary-General has initiated an assessment of best practices in public administrations around the world and examined various models of information access in different countries in developing a clear and consistent policy for determining which United Nations documents should be accessible outside the Secretariat. In the latter part of 2005, the Management Committee will review this comprehensive assessment and will provide guidance for a new policy. It should be noted that access to United Nations documentation that is neither restricted nor confidential is now freely available on the Internet through the Official Document System.

## **B. Selection and appointment of senior officials**

53. In order to enhance transparency in the appointment of senior officials, the Secretary-General has put in place a new selection process which ensures a much wider search for qualified candidates and allows for a rigorous, open process against predetermined criteria for all senior United Nations officials and heads of United Nations funds and programmes. As part of the new mechanism, the Senior Appointment Group (SAG) reviews candidatures for appointment by the Secretary-General. The Chef de Cabinet then constitutes an interview panel with a minimum of four members of the Group. The names of two or more finalists are then submitted to the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for final consideration.

54. In the case of senior appointments that involve intergovernmental bodies in the appointment process (for example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Office of Internal Oversight Services), shortlists are drawn up from a list of nominations submitted in response to a request for such nomination by the Secretary-General addressed to Members States and relevant institutions. Shortlists would also be developed through a more informal process of outreach and search. In the case of Secretariat appointments of a specialized nature, an outside technical expert may be invited to be part of the relevant interview panel. In all cases, clear job descriptions and required competencies will have been developed against which candidates can be judged. A more systematic process of vetting and reference-checking of candidates will be instituted, with external assistance whenever necessary. The Secretary-General will in all cases have the ultimate authority to make the final selection, taking into account other factors, such as geographical distribution and gender balance. Since the establishment of this new procedure, several senior-level posts have been filled via the new system, including those of UNDP, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and UNHCR.

## **C. Senior Review Group**

55. The Secretary-General has constituted a Senior Review Group as a standing advisory body to make recommendations to the Secretary-General on appointment and promotion to posts at the D-2 level. For the purpose of defining the terms of

reference of the Group, Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2005/4 was promulgated on 28 February 2005 and the membership of the Group was presented in information circular ST/IC/2005/33 of 1 July 2005. In accordance with the provisions of section 2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin, all appointments to this body are made by the Secretary-General. According to section 3, all D-2 vacancy announcements, except for vacant posts in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and for the special envoys, are to be circulated.

#### **D. External validation of the procurement system**

56. The Volcker Inquiry was critical of various United Nations procurement cases in the early years of the oil-for-food programme. However, since the mid-1990s, a major overhaul of the United Nations procurement process has been undertaken, making it more transparent and addressing any shortcomings identified in a number of different reviews. In the light of issues raised by the Volcker Inquiry, the Secretary-General commissioned a review, completed in June 2005, that compared existing procurement rules and regulations with the best global practices of outside organizations and companies in order to ensure that the improvements introduced since the mid to late 1990s met the highest global standards. In addition, in August 2005, the Secretary-General commissioned a full financial and internal control review of the United Nations current procurement system.

57. The June 2005 review evaluated positively the transparency achieved by the United Nations Procurement Service website. The review stated that the Service website (<http://www.un.org/Depts/ptd>) was an extensive, well-designed site with current information directly relevant to the needs of prospective and active suppliers and that the transparent and open approach of the Service to sourcing and vendor development was directly in line with that of leading public procurement agencies.

#### **E. Accounting standards**

58. The adoption of clear standards for accounting purposes is essential for transparent financial reporting. The High Level Committee on Management has approved a project for the development of such accounting standards within the United Nations system. This project is being undertaken by a Task Force under the auspices of the Committee's Finance and Budget Network. Possible standards have been identified and final proposals will be submitted by the Task Force to the Finance and Budget Network for approval prior to their presentation to the Committee for endorsement.

### **VII. Time frames for implementation of the recommendations of the oversight bodies**

59. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 59/264 A, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the funds and programmes of the United Nations to indicate expected time frames for the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, including the office-holders to be held accountable. A similar request was later reiterated in paragraph 6 of resolution 264 B; and in paragraph 7 of the same resolution, the Secretary-General

was further requested to provide an assessment to the Assembly at its sixtieth session on the progress achieved towards assigning time frames for the implementation of recommendations of the Board.

60. As per annex III of the present report, approximately 73 per cent of the recommendations addressed to the United Nations, and reported as outstanding to the Board of Auditors as at the end of June 2004, had time frames assigned for implementation. For the United Nations University (UNU), the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC), the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994, time frames were provided in 82 per cent, 50 per cent, 40 per cent and 47 per cent of cases, respectively. For all four organizations, the office-holders responsible for implementation were clearly identified for all outstanding recommendations. The progress towards proper assignment of time frames was acknowledged by the Board in paragraph 1 (a) of its current report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the status of implementation of its recommendations relating to the biennium 2002-2003 (see A/60/113, annex).

61. Owing to the high priority given to the implementation of all the approved recommendations of the Board of Auditors and the other oversight bodies, efforts have been intensified by the Secretariat to ensure that the recommendations of the other oversight bodies, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and JIU also have responsible office-holders assigned and time frames defined for their implementation. The Oversight Committee will have an overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with these requirements.

62. Overall progress is being made towards improving implementation rates. The Board of Auditors was pleased to note that the overall proportion of implementation of 34 per cent of the previous biennium had increased to 46 per cent in the biennium 2002-2003 (see A/60/113, annex, para. 9).

## **VIII. Conclusions and recommendations**

63. This report describes the measures taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen the system of accountability at the United Nations. In formulating these measures, the Secretary-General has taken into account the need for: (a) the clear definition of authority and results to be achieved; (b) the establishment of appropriate support and guidance mechanisms; (c) the strengthening of systems to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of performance; and (d) the provision of follow-up mechanisms that lead to appropriate recognition of both good and unsatisfactory performance, and investigations and appropriate corrective action if necessary.

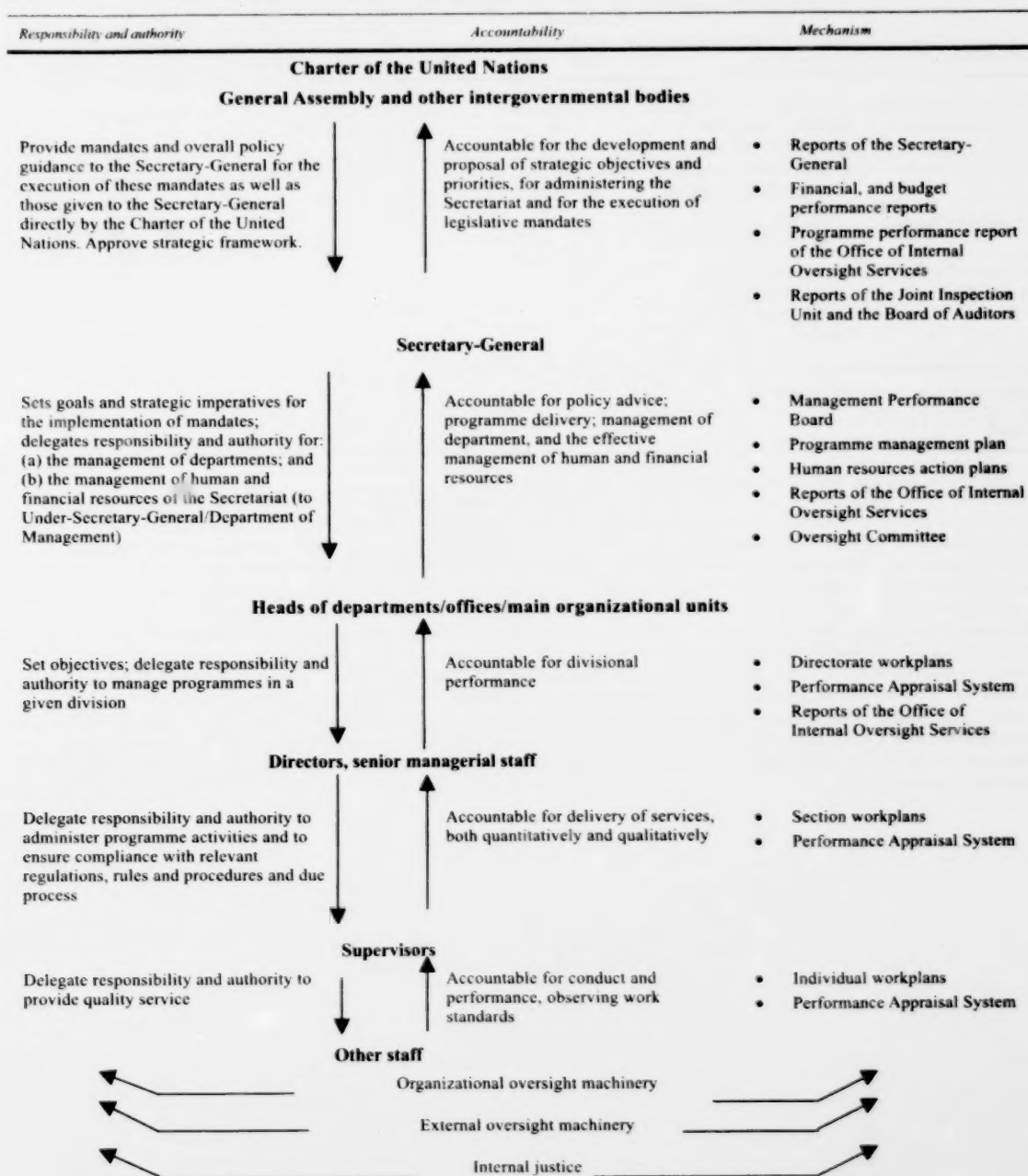
64. Many of the measures described, such as the establishment of the Management Performance Board and the proposed establishment of the Office of Ethics, will themselves lead to a further examination of the way that the United Nations

conducts its business and to additional measures to improve the system of accountability. Together with those already described in this report, they will help achieve the goal of ensuring that programme managers and staff are held accountable for the effective delivery of their work and the way they conduct themselves, and that both management and staff operate in an open and transparent environment, free from unethical conduct.

65. The General Assembly may wish to take note of this report, including of the fact that new elements are being added to the accountability framework that will strengthen accountability in the Secretariat.

## Annex I

## The accountability framework



## Annex II

## Survey results on audit and oversight committees

| Type of organization                           | Organizations                                                                        | Committees |           | Total number of organizations | Percentage with committees | Average number of members | Average frequency of meetings per year | Quorum |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------|
|                                                |                                                                                      | Yes        | No        |                               |                            |                           |                                        |        |
| Specialized agencies and related organizations | ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, ICAO, IMO, ITU, UPU, WMO, WIPO, UNIDO, WTO, IAEA, CTBTO, OPCW | 4          | 11        | 15                            | 27                         | 6-8                       | 3.5                                    | 4-5    |
| Funds and programmes                           | UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, UNHCR                                                      | 5          |           | 5                             | 100                        | 5-8                       | 4                                      | 4      |
| Multinational financial institutions           | World Bank Group, IMF, ADB, AfDB, EBRD, EIB, IADB, IFAD                              | 8          |           | 8                             | 100                        | 4-8                       | 2                                      | ..     |
| Other international organizations              | EC, OECD, CGIAR, IOM, OSCE                                                           | 3          | 2         | 5                             | 60                         | 4-7                       | ..                                     | ..     |
| <b>Total</b>                                   |                                                                                      | <b>20</b>  | <b>13</b> | <b>33</b>                     | <b>60.1</b>                |                           |                                        |        |

Note: Two dots (..) signify that data are unavailable.

Abbreviations: ADB, Asian Development Bank; AfDB, African Development Bank; CGIAR, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research; CTBTO, Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization; EBRD, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; EC, European Commission; EIB, European Investment Bank; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; IADB, Inter-American Development Bank; IAEA, International Atomic Energy Agency; ICAO, International Civil Aviation Organization; IFAD, International Fund for Agricultural Development; ILO, International Labour Organization; IMF, International Monetary Fund; IMO, International Maritime Organization; IOM, International Organization for Migration; ITU, International Telecommunication Union; OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; OPCW, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; OSCE, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; UNIDO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization; UPU, Universal Postal Union; WFP, World Food Programme; WHO, World Health Organization; WIPO, World Intellectual Property Organization; WMO, World Meteorological Organization; WTO, World Tourism Organization.

### Annex III

#### Assignment of time frames and status of implementation and recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the period 2002-2003

|                                                     | <i>United Nations</i> |                   | <i>UNU</i>    |                   | <i>ITC</i>    |                   | <i>ICTY</i>   |                   | <i>ICTR</i>   |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
|                                                     | <i>Number</i>         | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
| <b>Total number of recommendations</b>              | <b>69</b>             |                   | <b>26</b>     |                   | <b>10</b>     |                   | <b>22</b>     |                   | <b>26</b>     |                   |
| Recommendations reported as "completed"             | 24                    | 35                | 9             | 35                | 4             | 40                | 17            | 77                | 9             | 35                |
| Recommendations outstanding                         | 45                    | 65                | 17            | 65                | 6             | 60                | 5             | 23                | 17            | 65                |
| <b>Recommendations outstanding with time frames</b> | <b>33</b>             | <b>73</b>         | <b>14</b>     | <b>82</b>         | <b>3</b>      | <b>50</b>         | <b>2</b>      | <b>40</b>         | <b>8</b>      | <b>47</b>         |

*Abbreviations:* ICTR, International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994; ICTY, International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991; ITC, International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC); UNU, United Nations University.